DISCOURSE,

Part of it Preach'd at the

ASSIZES

HELD AT

BEDFORD,

COOLING, A. M. Vicar of
in the County of BEDFORD.

At the Request of some that heard it.

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THE EPISTLE TO THE READER.

Reader,

THIS Sermon had never ſeen the Light, had not the Importunity of ſome Friends given it a Birth. The Diſcourſe indeed is plain, unpoliſh'd, obvious to the meaneſt Capacity; but the Truths contained in it are very weighty and momentous. For till Men be perſwaded of the Neceſſity of the Practice of 'em, we can never expect a thorow and ſettled Reformation amongſt Mankind. The Subſtance of the following Sheets (I may ſay) contains in brief, the Sum of our Duty, founded both in Nature and Grace, VIZ. as we are Men, and as we are Chriſtians. Which to enlarge upon here would afford too wide a Field of Arguments to be confined within the narrow Compaſs of a ſhort Epiſtle. Such as it is, 'tis expos'd to the World with this Miſſion, Vade, ſed inculcatus,

this, That God may give his Bleſſing to it, for the Advancement of his Glory, by contributing to the Salvation of Mankind, is the hearty Prayer of him, who ſincerely wiſhes the Good of Souls,

Wotton, May the 30th, 1708.

DENIS COOLING.

Rom.

Rom. xii. Ver. 17.

Recompence to no Man Evil for Evil.

THIS Chapter contains ſeveral Aphoriſms for the regulating of a Chriſtian's Life: In all which it will not be neceſſary to ſtand upon Connexion or Dependance of that which goes before and follows after; for many of them are independent, and in themſelves ſeverally to be conſidered. The Text contains a general Prohibition, (*i. e.*) that no Man muſt retaliate Injuries. St. *Paul* look'd upon Revenge as a ſweet and grateful thing to Fleſh and Blood, or elſe he would not ſo often, and in ſo many Words, here forbid it. And tho' no Precept can be more plain than this, yet we ſhall ſcarce find any that is more generally neglected. So much is this Sin in Faſhion which is here prohibited, that he is by many thought unworthy the Name of a Man, who does not practiſe it; and nothing is look'd upon as a more undoubted Argument of a mean and cowardly Spirit, than patiently to paſs over and tamely to put up an Injury; nay, ſo far are many from not recompenſing *Evil for Evil*, that they recompence Evil for Good; and going quite contrary to the Rule of our bleſſed Saviour, they *curſe* thoſe who *bleſs* them, and *deſpitefully uſe* thoſe who moſt heartily *pray for them*. And tho' 'tis true, that in all Ages Men have been more or leſs Propenſe to this evil Practice; yet 'tis plain that in this preſent Age, by Reaſon of a more than ordinary Concurrence of many unhappy Cauſes, more irreconcileable Diſſentions, more implacable Animoſities, more bitter Envyings, more Ill-Nature, Sourneſs and Malignity of Temper is to be found than formerly. By Reaſon whereof Men are more ſtrongly bent, and as it were more impetuouſly hurried

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to the doing and repaying of Injuries. I have heard of a devout *English* Professor, who reading the 44*th* Verse of *Matth.* v. where our Saviour says, *Love your Enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you*; he cried out as it were in an Extacy; "Oh my Friends! either this is an "absurd Doctrine, or we are no good Christians. And therefore in order to the calming of Mens enraged Passions, the sweetening their imbittered Spirits, the restoring of Peace, the reviving of Charity, and the putting a Stop to the further Growth and Progress of this unchristian Practice: After I have spoken somewhat briefly of the Practice here prohibited, declaring the Import and the Extent of it; I shall endeavour to shew how sinful and foolish, how irreligious and unreasonable it is; by such Arguments as, with God's Blessing, may be of Force, not only to convince our Judgments, but to work upon our Wills and Affections an utter Aversion from and Abhorrence of it. That which is here prohibited in general, is the repaying or *rendring Evil for Evil*; all Manner of Revenge. For the more full Understanding of which, and the right stating of our Duty, we must *First* consider the Extent of the Evil here forbidden to be recompenced.

2*dly*, How many Ways a Man may be said to recompence Evil for Evil.

3*dly*, That the Prohibition reaches to all Persons, of what Degree or Quality soever. For no Man is permitted to recompence Evil for Evil, no, not to any Man. There being no Man in the World, to whom any Man in the World may recompence Evil for Evil.

1*st*, The Evil here forbidden to be recompenced, is not this or that Evil only, but Evil indefinitely and without any Limitation, and so is comprehensive of all sorts of Evil, of all Degrees of wrong, that one Man can receive from another, whether it be the Evil which is hurtful to his Mind, as Grief and Vexation; or to his Body, as Stripes and Wounds; or to his Goods, as Theft or Rapine; or to his Reputation, as Reproach and Slander; whether it be the Evil of Hand or Tongue, or but so much as the Evil of the Eye, (*i. e.*) the en-

envying the Happineſs of another, or wiſhing that Miſchief may befal him, which he before wiſh'd might fall upon us. Thus you ſee in ſhort, that there is no kind of Evil, that one Man can do unto another; and by conſequence, no Miſchief that one Man can receive from another, which this Evil in the Text doth not extend to. That a Man ſhould be his own Avenger, was not permitted by God to the *Jews*; for the Law of Retalliation recorded, *Exod.* xxi. 24. requiring Eye for Eye, Tooth for Tooth, Wound for Wound, Stripe for Stripe; the Execution of it was reſerved to the publick Magiſtrate, upon Complaint made by the injur'd Perſon. And therefore it can't be ſo much as imagin'd, that ſuch a Liberty as this ſhould be indulged to Chriſtians, whoſe Hands are more cloſely tied up from retalliating Injuries, than the *Jews* were. Nor is it enough for a Chriſtian not to repay himſelf the Wrong or Injury, which he has received, but he is moreover obliged not to procure or endeavour; no, nor ſo much as deſire that it may be repaid by others. Some Perſons who readily grant, that they may not avenge themſelves by their own Hands, think they may be allowed to do it by the Miniſters of publick Juſtice; in caſe therefore of any Injury received, their next Work is to addreſs to the Magiſtrate, and under that ſpecious Pretence of Law and Juſtice, to wreck and fulfil their Revenge upon their offending Brother. Whereas this is in Truth to recompence Evil as much as the other. For tho' the Executioner be not the ſame, yet what Difference is there as to the thing it ſelf, whether a Man receive the ſame Wound from my own Hands, or from the Hands of another, which is ſet on work by me. He doubtleſs is as highly criminal before God, who procures an Evil to be done by another, as he that does it himſelf. And therefore this falls under the Prohibition in the Text no leſs than the former. But becauſe in matters of Wrong a Man may lawfully in ſeveral Caſes fly to the Law for Sanctuary, for the Prevention of Miſtakes, and in order to a full Satisfaction; I ſhall in a few Words ſhew you what is permitted to a Chriſtian in this Caſe, and from thence infer, what it is that is here forbidden.

First then; A Man may lawfully defend himself and his just Rights against the Assaults of an injurious Person. 'Tis not therefore defensive but offensive Weapons, which we are forbidden the Use of; we may by all innocent Means endeavour to save our selves from Hurt, tho' we may not so much as wish the Hurt or Mischief of any, how injurious soever he may be to us.

Secondly, We may lawfully require Restitution or Satisfaction for the Damage we have sustained; and in Case the Offender be so unjust to deny it, we may, by the Assistance of the Magistrate, extort it from him. But yet this must be done with these Cautions or Limitations.

1*st*, Provided the Damage be considerable; for to create Trouble and Charges to another for a slight and trifling Interest, is utterly inconsistent with the Meekness and Gentleness, with the Goodness and Mercy, which are the constitutive Ingredients of every good Christian: But when the Loss is such, as in the Judgment of unpassionate and disinterested Persons, is valuable; such as if not repair'd, may render us less able to discharge those Duties, that either in our private or publick Capacities are incumbent upon us, we may then exact an amends from him, who was the Cause of it.

2*dly*, Provided the Offender be able either in whole or in part to make Recompence. For to prosecute him that has done thee wrong, in Case I know he is utterly unable to make any part of amends for it, can be nothing else but plainly and purely to render Evil for Evil, because I do Evil to him, without doing the least Good to my self; I add Weight to his Burden, and do not at all make my own the lighter; but rather with a Design to make him more miserable, I make my self so too. By putting my self to a fruitless Expence and Trouble; and by exposing my self as well as my Neighbour to those many Temptations to Injustice and Uncharitableness, which such Methods are always attended with. But in Case the Offender be fairly responsable for the Wrong he has done, and the Wrong be so burthensome, that we cannot without much Pain and Affliction bear the Weight of it, I know nothing in the Laws of Christ that forbid us

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to relieve our ſelves, by exacting Satisfaction in a legal way, provided ſtill, that we do it with a ſingle Eye or Deſign of repairing our Rights, without any Mixture of Malice or Deſire of doing Miſchief to the wong doer.

3*dly*, In Caſe the Wrong be not barely to our ſelves, but ſuch as redound to the Damage of the Publick, 'tis not only lawful, but it muſt be our Duty to proſecute the Offender, when our private Intereſt is ſo cloſely interwoven with that of others, that we can't relinquiſh our own without betraying of their Rights; then, I ſay, not only in Juſtice, but in Charity too, we are bound to a legal Proceſs. And becauſe we are obliged to prefer the Publick before any particular Man's private Benefit and Advantage, we ſhould ſhew our ſelves unworthy of humane Society ſhould we neglect the Redreſs of an Injury that is any way deſtructive to the publick Good. Now tho' in theſe Caſes mentioned much Evil may ſometimes be brought upon the delinquent Party, yet when he that proſecutes, only Deſigns and Endeavours the Defence or Recovery of his own or the publick Rights, the Miſchiefs, which unavoidably happen to the Criminal, are to be laid at his own Door. The thing then that is here forbidden, is rendring or returning Evil to another, not with a Deſign ſimply to repair our own Loſſes, or to ſecure the publick Good, but on Purpoſe to grieve and affl.ct him, who before has affl.cted us; that we may thereby gratifie our own Anger and malicious Humour; when we ſhall wound another in his Body, Goods or Name; becauſe we have ſuffered a Wound from him, tho' the Wound we give can afford no Cure for that we have received: This is ſo unworthy a thing, and ſo much below the noble and generous Spirit which Chriſt came to raiſe in the World, and exalts us to, that he thought fit to forbid it, and that not only to ſome, but to all Men in general. Which brings me to the next thing propoſed. That is,

3*dly*, The Perſons to whom this Command is given: And they are all the Sons and Daughters of Men, to whom it ſhall ever come, as the foregoing Precept implies. Let *Love be without Diſſimulation; abhor that which is evil,*

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cleave to that which is good; be kindly affectioned one to another; let your Charity extend to all Men, and ſo on to the Words of my Text; which is as univerſal as the reſt. And therefore in another Text the Note of Univerſallity is expreſly annext, 1 *Theſſ.* v. 15. *See that none render Evil for Evil*; no Perſon of what Degree or Quality ſoever. But here we muſt by the way obſerve, that this Precept does not interpoſe in the Magiſtrate's Office; for he is indiſpenſably bound, by Virtue of his Office, to recompence Evil to Evil-Doers, becauſe *he bears not the Sword in vain; he is God's Miniſter, a Revenger to execute Wrath to him that doth Evil*, Rom. xiii. 4. By which is intimated, that that Sword for Vengeance or Puniſhment of Offenders, which primarily belongs to God only, is, as far as reſpects this Life, put into the Hand of a lawful Magiſtrate, with Commiſſion to uſe it, as the Conſtitution of the Kingdom ſhall direct, either by way of Retalliation or otherwiſe. And what is thus done by him, is to be accounted God's Vengeance executed by him; and ſo no more contrary to the Prohibition of private Revenge than God's own Retributions would be, which yet are us'd as an Argument to prove the Unlawfulneſs of ours, *Ver.* 19. *Avenge not your ſelves, but rather give Place unto Wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine*; the Privilege then of puniſhing Offenders (*i. e.*) of Vengeance belongs primarily to God, and by his Deputation to none but thoſe to whom, for the things of this Life, he is pleas'd to communicate it. St. *Peter*, 1 Epiſt. ii. 13. commands us to be *ſubject to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's Sake; not only unto the King as Supream, but unto Governours alſo, as unto thoſe that are ſent*, i. e. commiſſionated *by him for the Puniſhment of Evil-Doers, and for the Praiſe of them that do well.* So that it muſt be granted, that not only the publick Magiſtrate, but Parents and Maſters, and other Superiours in private Authority, are inveſted with Power to puniſh thoſe that are under their Charge, proportionably to the Merit of their Offences, in all ſuch Caſes as are not reſerved to the publick Magiſtrate. And which is more; that not only Wrongs done to others, but even perſonal Injuries, or thoſe done to themſelves

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by thoſe that are plac'd in Subjection under them, may be lawfully puniſh'd by a Magiſtrate, Parent or Maſter reſpectively. But tho' all this be granted, yet it will not hence follow, but that every Perſon is obliged to the Duty in the Text; the ſupreme Magiſtrate as well as the meaneſt of his Subjects, and therefore private Governours much rather. And the Reaſon is, becauſe the Evil here forbidden is that of Revenge, in the ſtricteſt Notion of the Word, which both in its Original, Attendants and Ends, is ſo far remote from the Puniſhment of Delinquents by Perſons in Authority, that a Man may daily inflict the one without being touch'd with the Guilt of the other. For,

1*ſt*, In Revenge, the Perſon who takes it apprehends himſelf injured either in his Perſon or ſomething that belongs to him, whereas in Compariſon it rarely happens, that the Magiſtrate himſelf is injured by thoſe he puniſhes, but many times the Perſons puniſh'd by him, are ſuch as have highly obliged him.

2*dly*, Revenge derives it ſelf from Spight or Malignity of Mind, whereas the Puniſhment taken by the Magiſtrate proceeds (or at leaſt ſhould do ſo) from good Will, either to the Perſon, or to the Publick, or to both.

3*dly*, Revenge is always accompanied with Pleaſure and Delight in him that takes it. But Puniſhment is attended with Grief, Trouble, and Commiſeration of Mind in him that inflicts it: How often is the Magiſtrate troubled and concerned when he pronounces Sentence againſt a Malefactor? And the Bowels of a Parent yearn over the rebellious Son whom he chaſtizes. And therefore private Revenge and legal Puniſhment are vaſtly different in their Ends. Becauſe the End of Revenge is meerly to ſatisfie Anger, or to allay our own, by beholding another's Grief. Whereas the Ends of all Puniſhments which are not capital, is the Amendment of the Perſon puniſhed. And of all Puniſhments whatſoever, the Terror of the Example, that others may be afraid, and not tempted by Impunity to commit the ſame Offences, by which the Peace and Security, the good Order and Government of publick Societies are preſerved. From what has

been ſaid, I preſume, it may be ſufficiently evident, that Puniſhments and Revenge, in the common Senſe of the Word, are ſo widely different, that tho' the latter be forbidden to the Magiſtrate, yet it will be no Hindrance to the Execution of his Office, by inflicting the former. But that Magiſtrate, who executes the Law upon others, in Caſe he do it with Spight and Rancour, to vent his own Paſſion, and to eaſe his Spleen, he thereby himſelf becomes a Tranſgreſſor of the Law of Chriſt; ſo that the Sum of all is this: To render Evil to another meerly becauſe he has done Evil to us, to take Pleaſure in another's Pain, to think our ſelves more happy, becauſe we have made our Neighbour more miſerable, is no more allowed by the Law of God to the higheſt, than to the loweſt. But,

4*thly*, We muſt not do this to any Man in the World. *Recompence*, &c. *to no Man*; no, not to the moſt inveterate and implacable Enemy; not to a *Schiſmatick* or *Heretick*; not to a *Turk* or *Jew*; not to a Heathen; not to the moſt irreligious or atheiſtical Wretch in the World; not any Man of any Nation, of what Quality, State, Opinion or Religion ſoever. The Reſult then of what has been ſaid is this; That no Man in the World may repay to any Man in the World, either in the ſame kind or any other, either by his own Hand or by the Hands of others, any Manner of Wrong or Miſchief by way of Retalliation or Recompence for the Injury he has received from him. He may indeed (as I have intimated before) defend his own Rights; he may ſeek the Reparation of ſuch Wrongs as are weighty and valuable, if the Party obnoxious be able to make it. And in Caſe the Injury be ſuch, that if no amends be made for it, 'twill redound to the Damage of humane Society, he not only may, but ought to proſecute the Offender, and bring him to legal Puniſhment, tho' no Advantage accrue to himſelf by it. But without Reſpect to theſe or ſuch like Ends, to create Grief or Miſery to another is a thing ſo misbecoming a Man, that it ought not to be ſo much as once named among Chriſtians. And that it is ſo indeed, I ſhall endeavour now to ſhew you, by ſuch Arguments as (I hope) will be of Force to convince any rational Man, both how unreaſonable and irreligious, how fooliſh and brutiſh, as well as ſinful, this

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Practice is. The Arguments, for Method's Sake, I ſhall reduce to ſeveral Heads. And endeavour,

1*ſt*, To ſhew, how repugnant it is to the Holy Religion we profeſs.

2*dly*, How impious, in Reſpect of God.

3*dly*, How hurtful to our ſelves.

4*thly*, How unreaſonable, even in Reſpect of our Neighbour, who has wronged us. And,

5*thly*, How deſtructive of publick Peace, and how pernicious to humane Society.

Firſt, Nothing can be more plainly contrary to the Nature and Complexion of, nor more inconſiſtent with the Deſign of the Religion we profeſs; which is ſo far from being troubleſome and vexatious, hurtful and revengeful, that 'tis quite contrary, as the Apoſtle ſhews, *Jam.* iii. 17. for having told us in the Verſe foregoing, that *where Envying and Strife is, there is Confuſion and every evil Work*; here he declares that *the Wiſdom which is from above, is firſt pure, then peaceable, gentle, eaſie to be entreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, without Partiality and without Hypocriſie:* But more particularly,

Firſt, To render Evil for Evil is utterly inconſiſtent with thoſe gracious Qualities and Diſpoſitions of Mind, which it is the main Deſign of our holy Religion to plant and promote in us; ſuch as the Apoſtle enumerates, *Gal.* v. 22. *Love, Joy, Peace, Long-Suffering, Goodneſs, Humility, and Meekneſs.* Theſe are the Graces, by which Chriſtians ought to be known and diſtinguiſhed from other Men, as by their proper Badge and Livery. And therefore St. *Paul* deſires us, as we would approve our ſelves *the Elect of God holy and beloved*, Coloſſ. iii. 12, 13. that *we put on Bowels of Compaſſion, Kindneſs, Humbleneſs of Mind, Meekneſs, Long-Suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any Man have a Quarrel againſt any. And that above or over all theſe, we put on Charity, which is the Bond of Perfectneſs*, (i. e.) by an Hebraiſm, uſually in the Writings of this Apoſtle, a moſt perfect Bond, by which we ſhall be more cloſely tied together and entirely made one, than by any Bond whatſoever. And St. *Pet.* 1. Epiſt. iv. 8. requires, that *above all things we have fervent Charity among our ſelves*, and that for this Reaſon, *becauſe*

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Charity will cover a Multitude of Sins; not only of thoſe Sins, which are committed againſt God, but againſt our ſelves; and it will cover them from our own Eyes as well as from the Eyes of others, that we ſhall never ſee them ſo as to requite them. That an univerſal Charity extended even to the moſt mercileſs Enemies, is the great Glory and Perfection in which Chriſtians ought to outſhine others; we learn from our bleſſed Saviour's own Mouth, who, after he had commanded us *to love our Enemies*, and propounded the Example of God himſelf to move us to it, he concludes, *Matth.* v. 48. *Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father, which is in Heaven, is perfect.* By all which and by much more which might be produc'd, 'tis evident that the Spirit and Temper, which the Goſpel of Chriſt is deſign'd to work in us, is as oppoſite to that of Envy and Revenge as Light is to Darkneſs. For how can he be eaſily provoked by the Injuries of another, who is meek, and gentle, and patient, and Long-Suffering? How can he repay Evil to his Neighbour, who, notwithſtanding all the Evil he has ſuffered from him, is kindly affectioned towards him? How can he take Pleaſure in the Affliction of his Enemy, who has a Fellow-feeling of his Miſeries as if they were his own? It can't be; there is an utter Inconſiſtency in the thing it ſelf: And therefore if all thoſe who profeſs themſelves Chriſtians were of ſuch a Temper as their holy Religion requires, there could be no ſuch thing as a Thought of Revenge found among them: Which appears further, becauſe,

2*dly*, Nothing can be more repugnant to the preceptive Part of our Religion. For did we but take a particular View of thoſe Practices which are condemned by the Laws of Chriſt, we ſhould ſcarce find any that are more contrary to, or that bids more Defiance to his Commands, than this does. For,

Firſt, Nothing is more expreſly forbidden or prohibited; and that not barely once in my Text, but the Prohibition is frequently repeated, 1 *Pet.* iii. 8, 9. *Be ye all of one Mind, having Compaſſion one of another: be pitiful, be courteous, not rendring Evil for Evil, or Railing for Railing.* And St. *Paul* repeats the ſame Command with an eſpecial Charge prefixt, to engage us the more to the Obſervation of it, 1 *Theſſ.* v. 15. *See* or look

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to it, that none render Evil for Evil. If we conſult *Moſes* and the Prophets, we ſhall find, that God anciently forbid this even to the *Jews* with Reſpect to thoſe Perſons, which were of their own Nation and Religion, *Levit.* xix. 18. *Thou ſhalt not avenge, no, nor ſo much as bear any Grudge againſt the Children of thy People*, which we find afterwards repeated by *Solomon*, Prov. xx. 22. *Say not thou, I will recompence Evil, but wait on the Lord, who claims Vengeance as his own Right.* Now if God did not allow this in a Jew, can we think that he does not much more condemn it in a Chriſtian, who has many more, and thoſe much ſtronger Motives and Obligations to Charity than the Jews had? For,

2*dly*, So far muſt a Chriſtian be from rendring or recompencing Evil for Evil, that, on the contrary, he muſt return Good for Evil; ſo the Apoſtle commands in the Words immediately before my Text, *Ver.* 14. *Bleſs them which perſecute you.* And to ſhew the great Weight and Neceſſity of this Duty, he again repeats it and expreſly forbids the contrary, *Bleſs, and curſe not.* He does not ſay, do not remember Injuries, neither avenge them; but he requires that which is much more than any of theſe; to avenge is the Part of a Philoſopher, but to pray that theſe may be happy, who do what they can to make us miſerable, is becoming an Angel. And no leſs than this our Saviour requires of us, who profeſſes himſelf to be our Lord and Maſter; he himſelf not only counſels, but ſtrictly commands us *to love our Enemies, to bleſs them that curſe us, and to do good to them that hate us, and to pray for them that deſpitefully uſe us and perſecute us*, Matth. v. 44. He does not ſay, do not hate, but love; do not hurt, but good. And to incite our Obedience to this Command, he has more effectually taught us the ſame Leſſon by his own Example; in not only forgiving his mortal and moſt malicious Enemies, but praying to his Father to forgive them too, *Luke* xxiii. 34. And this indeed is no more than what even the Jews, how ill-natured and hard-hearted ſoever, were obliged unto towards thoſe Enemies at leaſt which were of their own Nation and Profeſſion. For God expreſly commands them, *Ezek.* xxiii. 4. *If thou meet thine Enemies Ox or his Aſs going aſtray, thou ſhalt ſurely bring it back again to him.*

him. If thou ſeeſt the Aſs of him that hates thee lying under his Burden, and wouldſt forbear to help him; thou ſhalt ſurely help him. Nor were they only obliged to ſhew Kindneſs to their Enemies Beaſts, but to their Perſons alſo, by relieving their Neceſſities, and ſupplying their Wants. For *if thine Enemy hunger, give him Bread to eat; and if he be thirſty give him Water to drink*, was given by *Solomon*, in Command to the *Jews* a thouſand Years before our Saviour's Manifeſtation in the Fleſh, *Prov.* xxv. 21. and was highly commended by many Heathens. Since therefore we are ſo ſtrictly obliged to be ſo far from repaying Evil with Evil, that on the contrary we are to recompence Evil with Good: Unleſs therefore we reſolve to go and do likewiſe; let us no longer pleaſe our ſelves with the Name of Chriſtians, *Luke* vi. 46. *Why call ye me Lord, Lord* (ſays our Saviour) *and do not the things which I ſay.* Chriſt will own none for his Servants but thoſe that obey his Commands. Let us not then think well of our ſelves for being Chriſtians in Name, unleſs by our Works we ſhew our ſelves Chriſtians indeed; for ſo far are we from being the better for our holy Profeſſion, that we are in Truth, much the worſe in Caſe our Practice be a Contradiction to it. As therefore we deſire to approve our ſelves what we profeſs to be, let us be ſo far from being overcome with Evil, that we overcome Evil with Good. But if the bare Commands of Chriſt ſhould be ſlighted by us, yet methinks the Rewards promis'd to thoſe that obey them, and the Puniſhments threatned to thoſe that neglect them, ſhould be a powerful and prevailing Motive. Therefore let us conſider,

3*dly*, What great Rewards our Religion promiſes to thoſe who obſerve theſe Commands, and what dreadful Puniſhment it threatens to them who deſpiſe them, *Matth.* vi. 14. *If we forgive Men their Treſpaſſes, our Heavenly Father will alſo forgive us*; which is a Promiſe comprehenſive of all the Happineſs our Hearts can wiſh for, *Pſal.* xxxii. 1. *Bleſſed is the Man whoſe Iniquities are forgiven, whoſe Sin is covered. Bleſſed is the Man unto whom the Lord imputeth not Iniquity.* Now this Bleſſedneſs ſhall not be the Portion of thoſe, who render Evil for Evil, but of thoſe, who heartily forgive the Offences of their Brethren. And for our better Aſſurance, our Saviour repeats it again, *Mark* xi. 25. *When ye ſtand praying, forgive, if ye have ought againſt*

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any Man: that your Father alſo which is in Heaven may forgive you your Treſpaſſes. Thus the Reward is here expreſly annext to this Grace. 'Tis not to exclude others, but to ſhew the excellency and neceſſity of this, how highly pleaſing 'tis to God, and what great influence it has in order to the commending us to his favour and acceptance. And as no leſs than happineſs, is the reward promis'd to thoſe who obey thoſe commands, ſo as great is the puniſhment threatned to them that deſpiſe them, *Jam.* ii. 13. He that ſhews no mercy to others, can look for nothing elſe but Judgment without Mercy; what meaſure we mete to others, God will at laſt mete it to us again, *Mat.* vii. 2. If we forgive our Neighbours, he will forgive us; if we ſhew Mercy, we ſhall obtain Mercy; if we will not forgive, neither will God forgive us; if we recompence to others their offences againſt us, he will at laſt recompence ours againſt himſelf. And how inexpreſſibly miſerable muſt that man be with whom God will deal according to the merits of his Sins? Thus you have heard that nothing can be more oppoſite to the Nature and Tendency of our Religion, than to repay injuries with injuries. 'Tis ſo manifeſt a contradiction to thoſe graces that 'tis the chief deſign of our Religion to plant and promote in us, that it bids open defiance to many of the expreſs and peremptory precepts, that 'tis threatned not only with temporal, but eternal Puniſhments, and that the greateſt rewards are promis'd to the contrary practice. 'Tis certainly a ſtrange thing that perſons who are of a ſpiteful and revengeful Spirit; who are impatient at the leaſt Neglect; who will not paſs by the moſt trifling affront; who can't (like the Phariſee) be ſo much as civil, unleſs it be to thoſe, who are ſo to them; who reſolve not to die in their Enemies debt, but to pay him home in his own Coyn; is it not ſtrange (I ſay) that ſuch perſons as theſe, ſhould take themſelves for Chriſtians? But we ſhall not wonder that our Religion has put in ſo many prohibitions againſt this Vice, and arm'd us with ſo many Weapons to oppoſe and vanquiſh it; if we do but ſeriouſly conſider what impiety it involves us in towards God, how hurtful it is to our ſelves, how unreaſonable in reſpect of our Neighbour, who has wrong'd us; how deſtructive of humane Society, and

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consequently how much it is condemn'd by that Law which is written in every one of our Hearts. 1*st*, He that avenges himself on him that injures him, is highly impious towards God. First, because he sacrilegiously usurps God's peculiar Right. This Argument we find used by the Apostle, v. 19. of this Chap. *Dearly beloved* (says he) *avenge not your selves, but rather give place unto Wrath.* Now, the *wrath* here spoken of may be either God's wrath, or our own, or that of our adversary. If we understand it of the wrath of God, the meaning is, do not anticipate the wrath or vengeance of God, but leave it to punish those that harm you. If of our own wrath, the sense is, suffer it not presently to break out into revenge, but give it time to cool and expire, by a Metaphor taken from Matter suddenly Inflam'd and Fir'd, which if pent up into a narrow compass consumes or shatters to pieces all that stands in its way; but give it room, & it spends it self and is extinguish'd without doing any mischief. If we refer it to the wrath of our enemy; the meaning is, do not violently resist, but decline and flee from it; or if that can't be, bear it patiently, and do not return Wrath for Wrath. And the reason of all this is, as it follows, because it is written, *Vengeance is mine, I will repay it, saith the Lord.* This we find written *Deut.* xxxii. 35. where God says of himself: *To me belongeth Vengeance and Recompence.* And the *Psalmist* thus addresses himself unto God, *Psal.* xciv. 1. *O Lord God, to whom Vengeance belongeth.* So proper is Vengeance to God, that it belongs to none besides him, except only to those, to whom he hath given an especial Licence to execute it; that is, to publick Magistrates and Superiors in Authority, who by virtue of their Office are also *Avengers.* But what is inflicted by them is to be accounted no other than the Vengeance of God; because they, as God's Ministers, are Commission'd by him. Whosoever therefore arrogates it to himself, without Authority deriv'd from God, he invades his Prerogative, and sets himself up in his Stead; he takes God's Work out of his Hands, as if he could do it better himself; which how highly provoking it must needs be to a Jealous God, who will not give his Glory to another, we may easily judge. 2*dly*, By avenging our selves, we are not only unjust to God in usurping

ping his Rights, but guilty also of the most horrid ingratitude, in not rendring to him according to the Benefits we have received from him. How merciful is God to us? How patient and long-suffering? How many and great Indignities do we daily offer to him? How little or nothing are the greatest injuries that the most potent and inveterate Enemy can do to us, in comparison of our Offences against God? *who is the Blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.* Should he be extream to mark our Sins against himself, nay, should he recompence to us the Iniquities but of one day, the best of us would not be able to abide, but should be crush'd into the bottomless Pit, under the insupportable Weight of his Vengeance. Nay, so far is God from punishing us after our Sins, or rewarding us according to our Iniquities, that he showrs down his Blessings upon our Heads, and daily loads us with his Benefits. What then does he expect from us by way of grateful Retributions? Surely he expects this at our Hands, that we should be also kind and merciful to our fellow Servants, as he is to us; that we should forgive their little Offences against our selves, as he forgives our great ones against him. That God does expect this from us, our Saviour has plainly taught us in that Parable of the King, who called his Servants to an Account for what they ow'd him. Now observe what the King said to the Servant, to whom he had forgiven *ten thousand Talents*, when he was so Unmerciful to his fellow Servant, that he would not forgive him an *hundred pence*, Mat. xviii. 32. *Thou wicked Servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me; shouldst not thou also have had Compassion on thy fellow Servant, even as I had pity on thee?* Had God required some great matters of us, should we not readily have done it, since all that we can do, nay, all that we can suffer, falls incomparably short of what we owe him. When therefore he requires us, in token of our Thankfulness, not to avenge our selves upon, but to forgive our injurious Neighbours, (a thing so small, so easie, so reasonable, so infinitely below what he might Justly exact from us) what Monsters of Ingratitude must we needs be, if we stick at this. Therefore if we have any Love for God, if we have any respect or regard to him, let us abhor this Sin for the future, and instead of

heaping coals of Vengeance upon our Enemy's head to consume him, heap only coals of Love, which may soften and melt him.

3dly, But in case we shou'd have no regard to God, yet it will be strange if we have no Love for our selves. I proceed therefore to shew how great an Evil it will be to our selves, to *recompence Evil for Evil* to any Man. For tho' our design be only to hurt our Enemies, yet are we therein grosly Mistaken, since in hurting them, we do really so much more Mischief to our selves, that our most envenom'd and spiteful Enemy cannot wish that a worse thing may befal us. For,

1st, He that repays or recompences an Evil or Injury, does the very same evil with him that first Inflicted it; and, by consequence, involves himself in the same Guilt, and makes himself full as bad a Man as the other. The main thing in which they differ is, that the one goes before the other; he that begins the Wrong leads the Way, and is first in the Transgression; the person that avenges it follows after, and does the very same thing which the other did before him. That which such Persons are wont to plead for the excusing or lessening of their crime is this, that they are provok'd by the wrongs which others have already, without Cause, done to them. Whereas this is in Truth so far from excusing, that upon some Accounts it rather aggravates the Sin, and renders them so much the more Inexcusable. For what's the reason why any Man is angry with his Neighbour? Is it not because he Judges he has done that which he ought not? because he has done that which is unbecoming a just and good Man to do? Can any Man then think it will excuse him to do that which his Neighbour has done; because he believes he has done that which he ought not to have done: can any Man think himself more Innocent in imitating another in those Actions, which he himself Condemns as vile and unworthy? None certainly can be so absurd, so destitute of common Sense, as to imagine it. This is a lesson which we may learn from many Heathens. *Pythagoras* tells us, That *we ought to do Justice, not only to those that are just to us, but to those who injure us; lest by repaying the Wrong they have done to us, we make our selves equally as bad as them.* And *Plato* concludes, That *since it is simply evil to do an injury; therefore he that has suffer'd one must not avenge it; because he, of ne-*

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ceſſity, does an injury, who Retaliates it. Nay, ſome of the Philoſophers have gone ſo high, as to affirm, That *he who avenges an injury, is of the two the moſt highly Criminal. I ſhall be bold to affirm,* (*ſays* Maximus Tyrius) *that if there be an exceſs of one Injury, above another, he that Avenges it is more unjuſt than he who was beforehand with him in doing the Wrong.* And the reaſon ſeems to be very plain; becauſe he offers violence to his own Conſcience before he can do ſo to his injurious Brother, by doing the very ſame evil himſelf which he before Condemn'd in the other. Conſcience certainly can't but tell him, that 'tis as great a Sin in him to Wrong another, as it is in another to Wrong him; that he is as much bound not Treſpaſs upon his Neighbour's right, as his Neighbour is bound not to Treſpaſs upon his. When therefore, either by Words or Actions, he returns the evil to his Neighbour, which before he condemn'd his Neighbour for doing to him, he muſt of neceſſity control the Dictates of his own Conſcience, and be ſelf-condemn'd. And now; what an intolerable Wrong this is to a Man's own ſelf (however inſenſible he may be of it for the preſent) he will come to underſtand, when his Conſcience, which is now debauch'd by falſe and fooliſh Principles, and miſerably enſlav'd to his Luſt and Paſſions, ſhall come to be diſabus'd and ſet at Liberty; how will it then accuſe, upbraid, and condemn Him? What Vengeance will it then take for all thoſe rude Indignities that he hath offer'd to it?

Secondly, By retorting or retaliating of Wrongs, we loſe many great and invaluable benefits, which by the patient enduring of them we ſhould receive, even by the Wrongs themſelves: 'Tis certain there is not any Injury or Affront ſo bad, but if we are not wanting to our Selves, we may improve it to our own Advantage. Perhaps our Enemy has a ſpiteful Eye upon us, watches narrowly for our Haltings, puts a bad conſtruction upon our moſt innocent Words and Actions, catches at every little Fault he obſerves in us, and magnifies every Mote into a Beam; what ſhould we now do? why *Plutarch* (tho' a Heathen) tells us; Inſtead of doing ſo to him again, be more cautious and circumſpect; keep a ſtricter watch over your ſelves, neither ſpeak nor do any thing Raſhly or Inconſiderately,

rately, amend whatsoever has been amiss, and endeavour to outdo him in whatsoever is praise worthy; turn to him an example in Justice and goodness, in Words irreprovable, in Actions pure. By this means we shall extract good out of evil, and make that which was design'd for our Disease, to become a Soveraign Medicine; we shall out-wit and defeat our Adversary, and make him sore against his will to become our Friend. And therefore when one ask'd *Diogenes*, by what means he might Avenge himself on his Adversary; he answered more like a Christian than a Heathen, by being thy self (said he) a Vertuous and a good Man. Besides, there is no Injury we receive, but it is in it self apt to promote and exalt those Graces, which are the strength and ornament, the riches and glory of a Christian: Such as Charity, Humility, Meekness, Gentleness, Patience, long Suffering, and the like; these are all exercis'd by him, who calmly Suffers, and does not proudly throw back the Injury. And by Exercise, these Graces are strengthned and brightened, made more vigorous and illustrious. And by improving in these Graces, we are render'd more like the blessed Jesus; who, in the Practice of these especially, has propounded himself a Pattern to us. Nay, by the Practice of these, we are made conformable to our heavenly Father, *who is God over all blessed for ever*; who glories chiefly in this, *Exod.* xxxiv. 6, 7. *That he is the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in Goodness and Truth, keeping Mercy for Thousands, forgiving Iniquity, Transgression and Sin.* Now what can we more ambitiously affect, than to resemble the most glorious and infinitely blessed Being; especially when we consider, that as we become more like him in Holiness here; so shall we be also advanced to a greater Likeness to him in Glory hereafter. For by how much the greater the Injuries are, which we suffer for his Sake, and meekly sustain, by so much the greater shall be our Reward in Heaven, and the more glorious our Crown. Nay, so many and so great are the Spiritual Advantages, for which we stand indebted to our Enemies, that St. *Chrysostom* speaks of it as a Matter of Admiration; See (says he) what great Gains accrues to thee by meekly bearing of Injuries; such as Remission of Sins, For-

titude,

titude, Patience and Perseverance, Meekness, Gentleness and Humility, an uninterrupted Calm and Tranquility of Mind; to which nothing is equal. So that we may justly conclude with the same Father, that by how much more injurious our Enemy is; since the Good we get by him encreases in Proportion to the Evil we suffer from him. This Temper will certainly prevent a great many harms and many formidable Dangers, which, by the contrary Practice, we should expose our selves unto. Agreeable to this, is that Story which *Seneca* tells us of an old Courtier, when one ask'd him, by *What Means he attained to old Age* (a thing so rarely met with in a Prince's Palace) he answered, *by receiving Injuries, and giving Thanks for them.* This Temper will recommend us to the Love and Esteem of all wise and vertuous Persons, since nothing can be a more undoubted Argument of a great and generous Soul, of one, who has got the Mastery over his own unruly Passions, and is able to govern himself: And therefore *Solomon* tells us, *Prov.* xix. 11. *The Prudence of a Man defers his Anger, and it is his Glory to pass over a Transgression.* *Plato*, when angry with his Servant, would not correct him at that time, but let him go, saying, *I am too angry to be severe now.* And a young Man, that had been brought up with him for some time, returning home to his Father's House, and hearing him chide and exclaim furiously, said, *Sir, I have never seen the like in Plato.* Meekness and Patience captivate the Affections of others, render us amiable even to our Enemies, and will beget a venerable Esteem in them of us, and by Consequence are of all Means most powerful to convert them from Enemies into Friends. These are some of those highly invaluable Benefits, which a Man reaps from Injuries, who is of a charitable and forgiving Temper; all which the angry and revengeful Man deprives himself of. Nor does he only lose these and many more Advantages, but he also brings upon himself the contrary Miseries. For,

1. Hereby he chafes and enrages the Smart and Pain of the Injury he has already received, and renders it more intolerable. Whosoever heartily forgives a Wrong, he is no more disquieted at the Thoughts of it; it is to him as if it had never been.

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He is as well contented, and is as happy a Man, as if no ſuch Evil had been done to him: Whereas on the contrary, the Man that meditates Revenge daily, renews his own Grief, and makes it more ſharp and afflictive, by putting new Stings into it; he galls himſelf the more by his impatient ſtrugling under his Burthen; he frets and inflames thoſe Wounds, that wou'd otherwiſe ſoon heal and do well of themſelves; and ſo inſtead of wounding his Enemy, he vexes and torments his own Soul, and as the Apoſtle ſpeaks in another Place, *pierces himſelf thorow with many Sorrows.* Nor does he think the Evil he already ſuffers more painful and burthenſome; but which is worſe,

4*thly*, He provokes his Enemy to wrong him more, and uſually brings greater Evils upon himſelf thereby. Revenge is both the Daughter and Mother of Injury. The Daughter of that which went before it, the Mother of many which follow after. For an Injury repai'd or recompenc'd, ſeldom fails to multiply and encreaſe upon him that repays it; and that not only in the ſame kind, but in a worſe. For by retalliating a reproachful Word only, how often does the Avenger expoſe himſelf to Blows and Wounds; nay, many times to Death it ſelf? I know 'tis ſaid, that tamely to paſs by an Injury, is the ready way to invite another. This indeed is ſaid, but 'tis by Men of wild and ſavage Tempers, who having put off Humanity, are fit only to dwell in a Wilderneſs, and to aſſociate with Beaſts of Prey. What *Solomon* aſſerts from his own Obſervation has been always, and ever will be found true in the general, *Prov.* xxv. 15. *A ſoft Tongue breaketh the Bones.* How ſoon was *David* as it were diſarm'd by *Abigal's* gentle Apology, and made as meek as a Lamb, 1 *Sam.* xxv. from Ver. 24, to Ver. 26. So were the hot and haſty *Ephramites* by *Gideon's* mild and modeſt Anſwer, *Judg.* viii. 2, 3. By gentle and good Words Perſons of the moſt churliſh and untractable Tempers are appeaſed and overcome. And if by Words only, how much more by kind and obliging Actions. Inſtances of this kind frequently occur both in prophane and ſacred Hiſtory; of which at preſent I ſhall mention but one; and that is of King *Saul*: Scarce was ever any Man more enviouſly and

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maliciously set against any Man than he was against *David*: Read the *24th* Chapter of 1 *Sam.* Yet when the evil Spirit was rais'd to the Height, how was it charm'd and laid? How did he relent and dissolve into Tears at the meek and humble Words, and the unexpected Kindness of *David* to him? I shall not need to insist upon particular Instances: I may appeal to every Man's own Experience; whether any Men are so usually free from Injuries, whether any lead so safe, quiet and peaceable Lives, as those who are most meek and patient, most good and gracious, and ready to forgive. For, do but turn your Eye the other way, and you will soon have a dismal and horrid Prospect. Mark the malicious, and behold the revengeful Man, and you will find it is otherwise with him. For, how often is he surrounded and assaulted with Dangers and Mischiefs? How frequently is he engaged in Quarrels and Frays? What *Solomon* says of the Drunkard, is as truly applicable to him, *Prov.* xxiii. 29. *Who has Wo? Who has Sorrow? Who has Contentions? Who has Babblings? Who has Wounds without Cause? Who has Redness of Eyes?* Certainly it is he who is impatient of every Abuse, he who retaliates every Injury; for by recompencing the Evil, he provokes and enrages the evil Doer. And not only so, but we give him the same Pretence and Plea for avenging himself upon us, that we before had for our avenging our selves upon him. And by this Means the Evil will never cease, but will be tost backward and forward without End. And the further it proceeds, so much the more mischievous and malignant it will grow. These are some of those Evils which the spiteful Man brings upon himself, and such as any Man wou'd think might be more than sufficient to affright us to the greatest Distance from this Sin. And yet,

5thly, These are so little, that they deserve not to be mentioned, if compared with those Evils he brings upon himself from God. For, by his Enmity against his Neighbour, he makes God an Enemy to himself, who will not entertain any Thoughts of Reconciliation to him, till he be first reconciled to his offending Brother. Now, God's sore Displeasure against him is manifest, by the dismal Fruits and Effects of it. For God is so angry with such, that he accepts of no religious Worship or Service,

but their moſt religious Services ſhall be rejected as unclean, ſo long as they are not in Charity with their Neighbour. This we are taught by our bleſſed Saviour, *Matth.* v. 23, 24. *If thou bring thy Gift to the Altar, and there remembreſt that thy Brother has ought againſt thee*, that is, for any Injury thou haſt done him, *leave there thy Gift before the Altar*; as if he had ſaid, do not dare to preſent it to God, *but go firſt and be reconciled to thy Brother*, (i. e.) do thy Endeavour to appeaſe his Anger, and to get him reconciled to thee; and after thou haſt ſo done, *then come and offer thy Gift*. And as the Sacrifices of old were rejected, when ſour'd with the Leaven of Malice in him that brought them; ſo as little acceptable will all our Chriſtian Sacrifices be, unleſs attended with Charity and Forgiveneſs in thoſe that offer them. For, as *with the Merciful, God will ſhew himſelf merciful*; ſo *with the Froward he will ſhew himſelf froward*, Pſal. xviii. 25, 26. I need not tell you that he is no fit Gueſt for the Feaſt of Love, *i. e.* the bleſſed Sacrament, who harbours Hatred in his Heart againſt any Man. Not ſo much as any Prayer which is made by him, however fervent and importunate, will ever be accepted. Nay, ſo far will it be from being acceptable, that it will be indeed an Abomination to the Lord. But further, ſhould ſuch Perſons as theſe not only offer up their Prayers to God, but their very Blood alſo: Should ſuch (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) 1 *Cor.* xiii. 3, *give their Bodies to be burnt*, die Martyrs to the true Religion; it would be a Sacrifice unacceptable unto God, if they be not in perfect Charity with their Brethren. Now in what a miſerable Eſtate muſt that Man be; all whoſe Prayers and Praiſes and other moſt holy things are turn'd into Sin? And yet this is not the worſt, his Miſery is ſtill greater. For,

2*dly*, So long as a Man is inclin'd to render Evil for Evil, and refuſes to forgive his Brother, he puts a Bar to the Forgiveneſs of his own Sins. *He that revenges* (ſaith the Son of *Sirach*) Eccluſ. xxviii. 1. *ſhall find Vengeance of the Lord, and he will keep his Sins in Remembrance. He ſhews no Mercy to a Man who is like himſelf, and doth he ask Forgiveneſs of his own Sins?* Ver. 4. *If he, who is but Fleſh, nourish Hatred; who will intreat for Pardon of his Sins?* Ver. 5. And as I have already ſhewed, our Saviour himſelf expreſly tells us, that if we *do not forgive*,

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neither will our Father which is in Heaven forgive our Treſpaſſes, Mark xi. 26. Nay, when God gives us a Pardon, it is upon Condition that we alſo pardon others. If therefore we fail on our Parts, our Pardon will be recalled, and all our Sins will return again in their full Weight and Vengeance upon our own Heads. Now as *that Man is bleſs'd, to whom the Lord will not impute Sin*; ſo how inexpreſſibly curſed and miſerable muſt he needs be, upon whom the Lord will lay the Guilt of his Iniquities? For the inevitable Conſequence of this, is Loſs and Pain endleſs and inſupportable. Such as in Malice reſemble Devils in this World, ſhall have their Portion with Devils in the next; they ſhall be everlaſtingly ſeparated from the Preſence of God, *in whoſe Preſence there is Fulneſs of Joy, & at whoſe right Hand are Pleaſures for evermore*, Pſal. xvi. 11. They ſhall ſuffer the Vengeance of eternal Fire, which they, by the Coals of their Revenge have kindled; and *who can dwell with devouring Fire? Who can dwell with everlaſting Burnings?* Iſa. xxxiii. 14. Now no Man certainly can think this hard Meaſure from God, if they conſider that it is no more than what they themſelves daily pray for. For as often as they uſe the Lord's Prayer, or any other conformable to it, they pray to God for their own Damnation. And the Reaſon is plain, becauſe we pray, *Forgive us our Treſpaſſes as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us*, (i. e.) we ask the Forgiveneſs of our Sins againſt God, upon Condition that we alſo forgive the Treſpaſſes of our Brethren againſt our ſelves. If therefore we do not forgive, we do in effect pray that God would never forgive us, but deal with us according to the Merits of our Sins. Now can that Man, who ſtudies Revenge, think of this without Horror and Trembling? Can he think the Puniſhment his own Sin deſerves ſo ſmall, that he can find in his Heart to pray for it, rather than remit the Puniſhment of his Neighbours Offences? If it be poſſible that any Man's Underſtanding ſhould at preſent be ſo darken'd, and his Conſcience ſo ſtupified with the Sins of his inordinate Paſſions, yet when he ſhall feel the Vengeance, which he now prays for, when he ſhall come to know experimentally what the Wages of Sin is, he will be ſufficiently ſenſible of the Madneſs of his Choice; he then will certainly rage againſt himſelf, aggravating his own Folly, become his own Tormentor, and himſelf

execute the Vengeance of God upon his own Soul. This is sufficient to convince any Man, that he who recompences Evil for Evil, has no Enemy in the World so bad as himself; that he brings more Mischief upon his own Head, than it is in the Power of any other, either Men or Devils, to do. Should we therefore be so impious as to have no Regard to the Religion we profess; yet methinks we should be powerfully perswaded by our own Interest. If, for God's Sake, we will not mortifie this deviliſh Passion, yet shall we not do it for our own? It seems superfluous to add any more Arguments to dissuade us from this Sin. For should we be so monstrously degenerated, as to contradict not only our Religion, but our Reason too; should we be so far from approving our selves Christians, as not to act like Men? Yet in Case we are not sunk below the bruit Creatures, the Arguments already propos'd will prevail with us. Since there is not the vilest of the Beasts that perish, that by the bare Instincts of Nature does not avoid those things which are destructive of its own Nature. But because Men suppose they have a sufficient Plea for their Revenge from the Injustice and Baseness of the Person they take Revenge upon; because however Evil it may be in it self, and however hurtful it may be to us, yet it is no more (they think) than what is due to him, or what he has deserv'd; for what, say they, is more just and equal, than that a Man should reap as he sows; that as he does to others it should be done to him again. I shall therefore endeavour to shew further, that Revenge is inhumane and unreasonable, even in respect of the Person who has done us the Wrong. And that upon these following Accounts.

First, Because he is so nearly related to us by Nature; and if he be a Christian, by Religion too. The Man whom we are so highly incens'd against, is he not our Brother, is he not of the same Blood? Doth he not derive his Pedigree from the same common Parents? *Moses* thought this a good Argument, *Acts* vii. 26. *Sirs, ye are Brethren, why do ye Wrong one to another*? And is not the Argument altogether as forcible? Sirs, ye are Brethren, why do ye recompence Evil one to another? It is true indeed, the close Union that is between us, ought to have kept him from doing us Wrong; and therefore he is so much

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the more to blame for doing it: But ſuppoſing he has done it, it ſhould be alſo of equal Force to with-hold us from avenging it. If one Foot ſhou'd be ſo unkind as to hurt another, ſhall the other be ſo unnatural as to return the Blow? The Reaſon is much the ſame in the Argument now before us, we are all Members of one Body, or as St. *Paul* expreſſes it, *Epheſ.* iv. 25. *we are all Members one of another.* And therefore 'tis as unreaſonable for us to recompence Evil one to another, as it would be in the Members of the natural Body ſo to do; and ſo much the more monſtrous is it, becauſe, as the Apoſtle tells us, 1 *Cor.* xii. 26. *if one Member ſuffer, all the Members ſuffer with it; or if one Member be honour'd, all the Members rejoice with it.* And therefore to do Deſpight unto our Neighbour, is in effect to be cruel to our ſelves; and to ſhew Favour unto him, is to be kind to our own Fleſh. And ſince our Neighbour is ſo nearly united to us, we may thence conclude, that the Wrong he does to us, is ever to be imputed to ſome Weakneſs or Indiſpoſition of Mind, either to Ignorance or Paſſion, or ſome other Diſtemper he labours under: Since we may well take it for granted, that were he truly himſelf, did he rightly underſtand and duly conſider what he does, he could never entertain a Thought of hurting of thoſe, who are *Bone of his Bone, and Fleſh of his Fleſh.* For, as in the natural Body, no Member creates any Grief or Pain to its fellow-Member, unleſs it ſelf be firſt ſore or diſeaſed; ſo likewiſe in the civil and myſtical Body, the Members that are ſound and healthful are ſo far from creating any Annoyance to others, that they are all naturally uſeful and ſerviceable to each other's Good. Is it not unreaſonable then to repay Evil to our Neighbour, who, had he been Maſter of himſelf, would have been ſo far from doing it, that he would from the Heart have abhorred the very Thoughts of it. Should a Man in a violent Fever or Phrenzy never ſo much abuſe us, ſhould we not judge it an unmanly thing to fall foul upon him again? Should we not rather excuſe and pity him? ſaying, alas! 'tis his Diſtemper, he knows not what he does; if he lives to come to himſelf he will be heartily ſorry for it: And ſhall we not much rather have Compaſſion for him, whoſe Soul is darkened with Ignorance, inflamed with Anger, puft up with Pride,

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racked (it may be) with covetous and insatiable Desires, disaffected not in one, but in all its Faculties; so that there is no sound Part to be found in it. And therefore instead of inflaming his Distemper by returning the Evil upon his own Head, we should rather, by all mild and gentle Applications, endeavour to remove it, and to bring him to a sound Constitution of Soul. And in case our charitable Endeavours in this way prove ineffectual, and he still persists in his evil Practices, and grows intollerably troublesome and afflictive to us; there is one Remedy at hand of God's own Appointment, which in such a Case we are allowed to have Recourse to; not with a Design of doing the least Mischief unto him, but of securing our selves from the Mischief that he would do to us: I mean, the Ministers of publick Justice, whom God has appointed to be the Physicians of the Body politick, for the curing or cutting off such diseased Members as breed nothing but Disturbance and Annoyance to their Fellow-Members: However 'tis certain that his Condition calls for our Pity, rather than our Wrath. This is plain, because by the Wrong he does to us, he does a far greater Injury to himself; he perhaps hurts our Body, but what is that to the wounding of his own Soul? The Mischief he does to himself so infinitely exceeds what he does to us, that there is no Comparison between them. Shall we then be so cruel as to wrong him more? No, rather by Meekness and Patience, by Kindness and Goodness, by friendly Advice and Counsel, let us teach him better things, and endeavour to bring him to a sober Mind. Thus you have heard how opposite it is to our Religion, how injurious towards God, how hurtful to our selves, how inhumane even with Respect to the Offender to recompence Evil for Evil.

I come now to the last general Head proposed. Which is to shew, That Revenge is no less destructive of the Publick than it is of the private Good either of our selves or of our Neighbours. For it breaks the Peace, inverts Order, overturns Government; and should it be generally practis'd, it would certainly introduce all the Mischiefs of War, Anarchy and Confusion. It is a true Saying, that the second Blow makes the Quarrel; for if the first be patiently born, no Quarrel would ensue

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upon it, nor Miſchief ariſe; but where that is return'd, a civil War is preſently commenc'd, which may perhaps be continued longer than the Lives of thoſe that begun it, for it may be derived from them to their Poſterity. The World (God knows) was never as yet brought to ſo good a paſs, as that any Country could be ſaid to be free from Hatred, Variance, Emulation, Wrath, Strife, and the like. But in all publick Societies, there has ever been no ſmall Number of covetous and rapacious, of proud, contentious, and ill tempered Perſons, who have been too apt to give Provocations. If every one that is provok'd ſhould purſue Revenge, all Peace would ſoon be at an End, all humane Societies would diſſolve, from Men we ſhould be transform'd into ravenous Beaſts, and would naturally bite and devour one another. Nor can it well be imagin'd how the Miſchief ſhould be prevented, if every Man ſhould take upon him to be a Judge and an Avenger in his own Cauſe. For in caſe he that apprehends himſelf wrong'd, will needs be a Judge, by the ſame Parity of Reaſon, he that does the Wrong may aſſume to himſelf the ſame Authority. And if every Man be his own Judge, their Determinations will be as contrary as their Judgments, and their Judgments as their Prejudices, Paſſions and Intereſts. And ſo the War muſt of Neceſſity be endleſs. If to recompence Evil for Evil were not prohibited; in caſe we were permitted every Man to be our own Avengers, then there would be no Place left for the publick Magiſtrate, but every private Perſon would aſcend the Tribunal and the Throne, and become a Law-giver and a Judge in his own Cauſe. We ſhould then have as many ſubordinate and ſupream Judges, as there are particular Perſons in the World, who do and repay Wrongs one to another. Nay, their Judgments would be as contrary to each other as their Affections and Intereſt; their Reſolutions and Determinations would be as contrary as their Judgments; and therefore they could never come to any Agreement among themſelves, but muſt be in a perpetual State of War: From whence would follow, in the Concluſion, the Diſſolution of all humane Society. For if every Man, who is ſuppoſed at any time to do any kind of Injury, either in Word or Deed; or every Man, who ſuppoſes himſelf to have receive

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[illegible] the World an Acheloa[illegible] put it into an Anxy and Confusion; and [illegible] fister for Wolves and Tygers than [illegible] desire not to be Disturbers and Dis[illegible] Peace [illegible] or take Care that we give a [illegible] sires of Revenge. Since the more these are indul[illegible] the more will the Peace be broken. And therefore [illegible] having in the Verse next after my Text commanded [illegible] *much as in us lies*) *to live peaceably with all Men*; he immediately adds this, as a Means in order to this End, and as that without which we can never [illegible] *Dearly beloved, avenge not your selves, but* [illegible] *Place unto Wrath, for it is written, Vengeance* [illegible] *repay, saith the Lord.* I shall close up all with that [illegible] Exhortation of the Apostle, *Phil.* iv. 8. *Finally, my* [illegible] *whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest,* [illegible] *whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good Report; if there be any* [illegible] *there be any Praise,* [illegible]

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